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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE			Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188
<small>Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188), Washington, DC 20503.</small>			
1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave Blank)	2. REPORT DATE <i>Sept 85</i> <del>Oct. 1984</del> <del>Sep. 1986</del>	3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED Final	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Significant Political-Military Developments in Sub-Saharan Africa		5. FUNDING NUMBERS	
6. AUTHOR(S) LaVerle Berry, Eunice Charles, Nancy Drexler, Robert Handloff, Mary Louise Harmon, T. Robert Lenaghan, Kenneth Liberstein, Moses Pinkston, Rachel Warner		8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Federal Research Division Library of Congress Washington, DC 20540-4840		10. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) N/A		11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES Prepared under an Interagency Agreement	
12a. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution unlimited.		12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE	
13. ABSTRACT (Maximum 200 words) A monthly open-source summary of important strategic, political, and military events in sub-Saharan Africa organized by region, country, and date of event.			
14. SUBJECT TERMS Africa, Sub-Sahara Government Politics National security		15. NUMBER OF PAGES Various lengths	
17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT UNCLASSIFIED		16. PRICE CODE	
18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE UNCLASSIFIED		19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT UNCLASSIFIED	
20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT SAR			

**SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL-MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS  
IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA**

September 1985

Prepared by the Federal Research Division of  
the Library of Congress under an interagency agreement

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## PREFACE

This chronology is organized by region, country, and date of event. The date of event is sometimes difficult to determine because it varies from source to source. Some sources cite the actual date of the incident whereas others appear to use the official news release dateline. When possible, the actual date of the occurrence is listed.

Analysts contributing to this chronology are Nancy Drexler, Robert Handloff, Mary Louise Harmon, R. Thomas Lenaghan, Kenneth Liberstein, Moses Pinkston, and Rachel Warner.

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East/Central Africa

**Uganda**

00/09/85 The situation in Uganda remains unstable. Talks between the military government and the National Resistance Army (NRA) continue during September, but an informal cease-fire established on 27 July is broken. There are clashes between NRA and government troops at Jinja and Masaka, Uganda's second and third largest towns. The NRA also attacks a military base only 10 miles from Kampala. There are reports of government troops looting, killing, and raping civilians in several areas.

Horn of Africa

**Somalia**

07/09/85 The Somali National Movement (SNM) reports three attacks on government troops during September: an attack in Bakool region in southern Somalia on 7 September; a hit-and-run attack in Hiiraan region; and an attack on a military base in Hargeysa District in which the SNM claims to have burned the base and killed 130 government troops.

15/09/85 The Democratic Front for the Salvation of Somalia (DFSS) reports three successful attacks on government forces in mid-September. In one, on a military base at Dusa Marreb on 15 September, the DFSS claims to have killed 68 government troops. These reports cannot be verified.

**Sudan**

19/09/85 Thousands of Sudanese demonstrate in front of the Egyptian Embassy in Khartoum, demanding former President Numeiri's extradition and criticizing Hosni Mubarak as a Zionist agent. The protest reflects the depth of the public's resentment and its determination to continue pressuring the ruling Transitional Military Council to prosecute individuals guilty of committing various criminal acts under Numeiri. It also captures the sentiments of the current political mood in Sudan, which is advocating increased distance in Egyptian-Sudanese relations.

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22/09/85 Junior-level officers in the Sudanese Armed Forces attempt a military coup in Khartoum. Although the challenge to the government is unsuccessful, it signifies dissatisfaction with the ruling coalition's policies. The dissension within the ranks of the military increases the difficulties General Siwardahab faces in his attempt to stabilize the nation.

24/09/85 Violent confrontations break out in Khartoum between members of the Muslim Brotherhood, led by Hassan al-Turabi, and southern Sudanese, resulting in four deaths and numerous injuries. The fighting stems from the Muslim Brotherhood's disgust with the refusal of the Sudanese Peoples' Liberation Movement (SPLA) to commence negotiations with the ruling Transitional Military Council. The clashes between these two dominant groups reflect another schism dividing Sudanese society.

Sahel

Burkina

01/09/85 Following a 3-week exile on state farms, all but 3 of the 22 Burkinabe cabinet ministers serving the Sankara government return to their previous posts. Included are the three army officers who acted as general coordinators following the mandated exile on 12 August 1985. The exile was intended to demystify the role of cabinet officer, to show that none was indispensable, and to expose the ministers to the problems of the country.

Chad

08/09/85 According to the Chadian Government, two French Jaguar fighters violate Chadian airspace by flying over positions of the National Liberation Army (ANL) commando units in Chicha and Birma Tara in the south before heading toward Fada in the north. Intervention by the fighter planes, which belong to French forces based in neighboring Central African Republic, is considered interference in Chad's internal affairs and has increased tension in the area.

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Sahel

Chad

13/09/85 Military leader Moussa Mohamat, Commander of the Third Grouping of the Occupied Areas, and 15 of his soldiers leave Fada to join the Chadian Armed Forces (FANT) in Oum Chalouba-Kalait. The defection of this group of soldiers to government forces is part of a larger exodus taking place in the occupied areas.

13/09/85 Tension is still high in the Lat-Kanem sector of western Chad following recent clashes between Northern Armed Forces (FAN) groups and units operating under the umbrella of the National Liberation Army (ANL). FAN reportedly lost 41 soldiers and suffered heavy equipment damage.

18/09/85 The Chadian ambassador to Paris claims that direct contact has been made with Libya which could lead to a meeting between Chadian President Hissein Habre and Libyan President Qadhafi. The ambassador also claimed that the Ouadi-Dum airport, 150 kilometers northeast of Faya-Largeau, has been completed and that large Libyan transport planes are already landing there.

Southern Africa

Angola

02/09/85 The National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) claims that it has evidence that Soviet officers are intervening in an offensive against UNITA bases in eastern Angola, and Soviet officers are directing the operation of the 14th and 21st Brigades, operating in the Cazombo region, and the 8th and 13th Brigades, operating in Mavinga. According to UNITA, Soviet military elements, together with Portuguese and Cubans, are piloting MiG-17, MiG-21, and MiG-23 fighter planes as well as helicopters.

05/09/85 Soviet First Lieutenant K. Kirov Vioroshilov, instructor of the Angolan Army's 8th Motorized Brigade, is killed in

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Kunyamba, Cuando-Cubango Province in southeastern Angola, during an attack by UNITA guerrillas. The presence of Vioroshilov in Kunyamba may be indicative of a growing active military role by the Soviet Union in Angola.

16/09/85 South African forces launch a raid into southern Angola in a follow-up operation against SWAPO insurgents. The 500-man invasion force is being supported by the South African Air Force and is aimed primarily at SWAPO's Eighth Battalion.

**Mozambique**

07/09/85 RENAMO announces that it is releasing 10 missionaries, including two Britons, two Italians, and three Portuguese, who have been held hostage since an attack on Luabo Sugar Central in Zambezia Province last month. Two Soviet citizens are still being held hostage.

10/09/85 Major General Salvador Ntumugue, Maputo Provincial Military Commander, announces that the Mozambican Armed Forces are carrying out mopping-up operations against RENAMO in southern Mozambique as part of the offensive under way throughout the country. In Maputo Province, military action is directed in the districts of Magude and Manhica. An official military spokesman announces that the offensive in the Gorongosa Mountains is continuing against Gogogo camp, a RENAMO stronghold.

**Mozambique/Zimbabwe**

12/09/85 A clandestine radio station in Zimbabwe claims that the number of Zimbabwean troops now deployed in Mozambique has reached 12,000, confirming the use of Zimbabwean soldiers in direct battle with RENAMO.

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25/09/85 A series of explosions rocks a Mozambican Army ammunition depot in the suburbs of Maputo, killing 2 children and injuring 40 people. In Portugal, a RENAMO spokesman claims that a battalion of special RENAMO troops was responsible for sabotaging the depot, which is in Malhazine, six miles from downtown Maputo. The attack is the first since RENAMO threatened to intensify its urban guerrilla operations after its Gorongosa Mountain base, Banana House, was captured at the end of August by government troops with the help of Zimbabwean troops. Other bases in the region have also been captured, including Muchamba base, south of Chimoio, and Rungo base, south of Banana House. The capture of these RENAMO strongholds is a major achievement on the part of government troops, and the direct result of Zimbabwean military cooperation.

**Namibia**

05/09/85 Police uncover a 125 kilogram cache of high plastic explosives in 2 houses in Katutura Township on the outskirts of Windhoek, according to the Chief of the Security Police, Brigadier Sarel Strydom. This is the largest single amount of explosives found in the possession of South West African People's Organization (SWAPO) guerrillas. The Soviet-made explosives with 80 detonators were hidden in 2 spare wheels, a suitcase, and 2 plastic bags. The wheels, containing 35 kilograms of high explosives, were to be used as bombs in Windhoek's main Post Office and a hotel.

**South Africa**

03/09/85 South Africa's black National Union of Mineworkers announces the suspension of a strike against five gold and two coal mines after 48 hours. The suspension removes a threat to two of South Africa's principal exports, gold and coal, and reduces the possibility of violence spreading to the mining industry. The mines where the strike was called are operated by Gold Fields of South Africa, Gencor, and Anglovaal.

South Africa



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- 03/09/85 End Conscription Campaign Press Officer David Shandler announces in Cape Town that there has been a dramatic increase in the number of men failing to register for military service since the South African Defense Forces (SADF) entered the townships. In 1984, 1,596 men failed to register with the SADF, and by January 1985, 3 months after SADF troops entered the townships, 7,589 men had failed to register.
- 05/09/85 White residents respond with gunfire as crowds of mixed race youths hurl rocks and gasoline bombs at homes in a white suburb outside Cape Town. The incident is the first known racial violence in a white area during a year of unrest that has claimed over 670 lives.
- 14/09/85 According to a former Assistant Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, South Africa has the ability to build two atom bombs a year from nuclear material produced by its secret Valindaba uranium enrichment plant. The pilot plant, near Hartbeespoort Dam, has the capacity to make enough highly enriched uranium for such bombs in total secrecy. Valindaba is designed to manufacture 50 tons a year of lowly enriched fuel for the Koeberg nuclear power plant. By reprocessing such fuel, enrichment plants are capable of producing 90 percent enriched uranium.
- 24/09/85 The police announce the death in detention of United Democratic Front (UDF) black activist Mbuyiselo Mbotya, who had been imprisoned in King William's Town. Mbotya died in the hospital in East London after surgery for wounds to the head received during his 24-hour detention.
- 27/09/85 Three bombs explode in supermarkets in the port city of Durban, causing no casualties. The bombings are the first

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such attacks in South Africa in 3 months, and the first in a shopping complex. The supermarket attacks, thought to be the work of the African National Congress (ANC), reveal a measure of caution, with all the bombs exploding after closing time when the stores were empty. A fourth bomb is found in another supermarket and defused before it explodes.

**South**

**Africa/Mozambique**

20/09/85 South Africa acknowledges that its armed forces have violated the Nkomati Accord signed with Mozambique in March 1984. During a news conference, Foreign Minister Pik Botha admits that South Africa has maintained radio links with RENAMO rebels, prepared a landing strip for them, and has been making air force supply drops. He also admits that Deputy Foreign Minister Louis Nel had made three secret trips to RENAMO headquarters in Mozambique, and that RENAMO officers had been ferried in and out of the country, on at least one occasion by submarine. The South African admission comes after the capture last month of RENAMO headquarters, during which the revealing diary of a RENAMO official was seized. It also comes just before Machel's meeting with President Reagan in Washington.

**Zimbabwe**

29/08/85 Crack units of the Zimbabwean Army's Fourth Brigade are deployed in the south after an attack by Zimbabwe African People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) guerrillas in Matabeleland in which 24 people were killed. The guerrillas attacked farms, schools, and targets in the business center of Mwenezi, 400 kilometers from the capital, Harare. This attack is the latest incident in the struggle for power between the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union, led by Prime Minister Robert Mugabe, and the Zimbabwe African People's Union, led by Joshua Nkomo.

**West Africa**

10/09/85 Heads of State of the five Entente Council states--Ivory Coast, Benin, Togo, Niger, and Burkina Faso--meet in Yamoussoukro, Ivory Coast, and issue an unusual communique pledging cooperation in preventing and combating sabotage.

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Captain Thomas Sankara of Burkina Faso does not sign the communique, in protest of language that, while addressing recent incidents in Niger and Togo, omits those in Burkina Faso, and in protest of the absence of any sympathy and reciprocity from all other Council members, except Benin. In other business, the Council votes to spend most of its funds on projects to develop food crops and sources of potable water.

**Ivory Coast/Ghana**

02/09/85 Several incidents following a soccer match between teams from Ivory Coast and Ghana threaten relations between the two countries. After the match, which resulted in the elimination of the Ghanaian team, some Ghanaian fans supposedly maltreated some of the 5,000 Ivoirians attending the match. In response, attacks on Ghanaians occur throughout Ivory Coast, particularly in Abidjan where four Ghanaian women, including one who was pregnant, are missing after having been thrown into a lagoon. Subsequently, hundreds of Ghanaians seek refuge in police stations and the Ghanaian Embassy, while as many as 3,000 others are escorted to a military camp for their own protection. In an unprecedented move the Political Bureau of the Ivory Coast Democratic Party issues a statement minimizing the supposed mistreatment of Ivoirian fans in Kumasi, and appeals for a halt to the persecution of Ghanaians in Ivory Coast.

**Liberia**

02/09/85 The Liberian Unification Party (LUP) and the Liberian Action Party (LAP) pass the last legal hurdles towards full participation in the presidential elections scheduled for October. This brings the total number of registered parties to four, including the Unity Party (UP) and President Doe's own National Democratic Party of Liberia (NDPL). The last minute addition of the LAP and LUP gives some indication of Doe's desire to give the October elections a greater appearance of fairness, in deference mainly to pressure from the United States.

**Nigeria**

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- 31/08/85 Following the coup of 27 August 1985, Nigeria's new military rulers release from prison six former ministers, five former provincial governors, two journalists, and other officials. Meanwhile, former Head of State Major General Buhari is being held in the Bonny Military Camp near Lagos.
- 04/09/85 The new government of Major General Ibrahim Babangida is making several sharp breaks with the past, including the breaking up of the traditional monopoly of northern Hausa-Fulani. Also, a younger generation of officers, who share the political views of the Army's junior officers, now dominates the administration of 19 states. Finally, Babangida has given himself a freer hand in setting policy as the policy-making power of the AFRC has been diminished and the new Chief of Staff, unlike his predecessor Tunde Idiagbon, will have neither decision-making power nor military responsibilities.
- 10/09/85 Major General Tunde Idiagbon, number two man in the recently ousted Buhari government, returns to Nigeria and is placed under house arrest. Idiagbon had been in Saudi Arabia on a pilgrimage at the time of the coup.
- 10/09/85 President Babangida announces the formation of a new government which includes 11 civilian and 11 military ministers, 12 northern and 10 southern ministers, and new and previous office holders. The Buhari regime is represented by six ministers of the previous regime, while two military governors from the previous regime have been promoted to the rank of minister. At the same time the appointment of Nigerian Bar President Bola Ajibola to the Ministry of Justice signals a clear break with the repressive policies of the earlier government.

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31/09/85 In a speech marking Nigeria's 25th anniversary of independence, President Babangida paints a bleak picture of Nigeria since independence. He announces a 15-month state of emergency that includes, among other measures, an end to the practice of bartering oil for consumer goods. He also says that in January 1986, he will announce a plan for returning Nigeria to civilian rule within 3 years. Despite Babangida's prescriptions, Nigeria faces severe problems, including an exploding population, a 75 percent illiteracy rate, and a nearly bankrupt treasury.

Togo

01/09/85 A delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea under Kim Chae-pong, member of the Central Committee and Deputy in the National Assembly, arrives in Togo for a 4-day visit at the invitation of Rally of the Togolese People (RPT). Talks between Koreans and Togolese focus on diplomatic cooperation between the two states and political organization.